

Application No.: 10/690,291

Docket No.: EDRICH 3.0-004

IN THE DRAWINGS

Attachment: Replacement Sheets 4 and 9.

REMARKS

This Amendment is filed in response to the Office Action mailed December 14, 2005, the shortened statutory period for filing a response having expired on March 14, 2006. Applicant submits herewith a three-month extension petition to reset the deadline for responding to the Office Action to and including June 14, 2006. In view of the following amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the Examiners rejections and Notice of Allowance of all pending claims is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 through 47 are pending in the present application. In light of a previous election, claims 1-18, 24, and 33-35 have been withdrawn, leaving claims 19-23, 25-32, and 36-47 pending.

As initial matter, Applicants note with appreciation the Examiners indication that claims 19-23 and 25-32 are allowable. Applicants also note with appreciation the Examiners indication that claims 37-46 have been objected to, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In order to expedite issuance of this application, Applicants have rewritten claim 37 in independent form as suggested by the Examiner, leaving claim 37 in a condition which is believed to be allowable. Claims 38-46 ultimately depend from claim 37, and should therefore also be allowable. Claims 38-46 are also believed to include additional patentable subject matter.

The Examiner has required amendment to the drawing sheets to include reference signs for the support protrusion (element 121), belt assembly (element 550), and laproscopic grasper (element 556). Applicants have amended the drawings as

requested and present Replacement Sheets for drawings 4/14 and 9/14 herein.

The Examiner has also required amendment to the specification to correct several informalities. Applicants have made those corrections herein.

Finally, the Examiner requests correction of claim 26 to obviate an informality. Claim 26 has been amended as required by the Examiner.

With respect to the substantive rejections, claims 36 and 47 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,728,047 issued to Edoga ("*Edoga*"). Claim 36 has been cancelled by way of this Amendment. Claim 47 has been amended to include features found in allowable claim 37, and is therefore expected to be allowable over *Edoga*. More particularly, claim 47 has been amended to generally include a locking apparatus, where the locking apparatus comprises a fixed block, a rotatable block, and a locking mechanism for selectively rotating and locking the rotatable block.

It is therefore firmly believed that each of the pending claims, namely claims 19-32 and 37-47 are in allowable condition.

As it is believed that all of the rejections set forth in the Office Action have been fully met, favorable reconsideration and allowance of each independent claim is earnestly solicited.

If, however, for any reason the Examiner does not believe that such action can be taken at this time, it is respectfully requested that he telephone Applicants' attorney at (908) 654-5000 in order to overcome any additional objections which he might have.

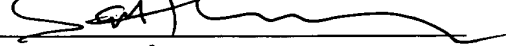
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If there are any additional charges in connection with this requested amendment, the Examiner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 12-1095 therefor.

Dated: June 13, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By 
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